

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of House Resolution 605. I am pleased to cosponsor this resolution, which recognizes the continued persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China. The peace-loving people who practice Falun Gong have endured the Chinese Government's coordinated campaign to delegitimize and eradicate their belief system for over a decade. In China, Falun Gong has been officially labeled an 'evil cult,' and its practitioners have suffered censorship, extrajudicial arrests and detentions, involuntary reeducation through labor, torture, and even death for their personal beliefs.

Disappearances of Falun Gong practitioners are not uncommon and are especially difficult for family members who must live in uncertainty about the fate of their loved ones. I recently was informed by one of my constituents about the heartbreaking case of Jiang Feng, who simply vanished after going through airport security at Shanghai's Pudong Airport and before he made it to the gate for his flight to Newark, NJ. Jiang Feng and his wife, Mei Xuan, both are Falun Gong practitioners and were arrested in the 1999 crackdown. Because of repeated imprisonments, the couple has been separated for most of their decade-long marriage. Mei Xuan is a well-known musician in Shen Yun Performing Arts, which rekindles the traditional Chinese arts and portrays current events, including the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. She was expecting finally to reunite with her husband here in the United States. Now, she awaits word on his whereabouts and his fate, fearing the worst.

Stories like Mei Xuan's are far too common. As Americans and members of the international community, we have a responsibility to speak out against persecution and to stand up for the truths and unalienable rights that we hold dear. Falun Gong practitioners, and all those seeking to exercise the universal right to freely practice the religion of their choice and to express their beliefs openly, deserve profound U.S. leadership on their behalf. I am pleased to vote for this resolution and to give voice to all those who continue to suffer needlessly and cannot speak for themselves.